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Kim Jong Un presides over meeting of company commanders and political instructors

The Fifth Conference of Company Commanders and Political Instructors of the Korean People's Army took place on March 25-26 in Pyongyang.

Kim Jong Un, chairman of the Workers' Party of Korea, chairman of the DPRK State Affairs Commission and supreme commander of the Korean People's Army, presided over the meeting.

The platform was taken by Ri Myong Su, Kim Su Gil, Ri Yong Gil, No Kwang Chol and other senior officials of military organs and KPA commanding officers, exemplary company commanders and political instructors. The meeting was attended by other company commanders and political instructors who took the lead in implementing the WPK's idea and policy on attaching importance to the company and commanding and political officers of units and military schools at all levels.

The meeting reviewed the achievements made and experiences gained in the course of translating into reality the spirit of the Fourth Conference

of Company Commanders and Political Instructors of the KPA and discussed the tasks and ways to further enhance the responsibility and role of company commanders and political instructors to meet the requirements for modelling the entire army on Kimilsungism-Kimjongilism.

Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un, in the opening address, said that over the past five years measures were taken to strictly apply the main spirit of the Fourth Conference of Company Commanders and Political Instructors of the KPA to

army building and military affairs and guidance was intensified to this end, with the result that marked achievements were made in strengthening all companies of the entire army and a springboard has been provided for making the KPA an ever-victorious elite force.

The prevailing revolutionary situation demands that the KPA build up its combat capability more than ever before in every way, he said, adding the KPA is faced with important tasks to defend the security of the country and surely guarantee the heroic creative efforts of the

improvement in the ideological and spiritual qualities and work attitude of company commanders and political instructors and the great achievements made in consolidating in every way the political and military strength of companies in the midst of the drive in the KPA to carry out the important tasks set forth at the Fourth Conference of Company Commanders and Political Instructors of the KPA.

He pointed out the tasks to be tackled in building up the combat

Korean people with arms.

Expressing the belief that the current meeting would be a significant occasion for setting up a new milestone in strengthening companies by thoroughly implementing the Party's idea and policy on attaching importance to companies in line with the requirements of the developing revolution, he declared the conference open.

Army General Kim Su Gil, director of the KPA General Political Bureau, in his report, referred to the radical



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capability of the company, the cell of the KPA and its basic combat unit, in every way.

He emphasized the need for company commanders and political instructors to cherish the immutable faith that as the country is led by Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un, the DPRK is dignified and powerful and has a bright future and to make their companies the vanguard of loyalty that share the idea and intention of the Supreme Commander and throw in their lot with him and the most elite combat ranks in safeguarding the Party Central Committee at the risk of their lives.

He referred to their tasks of conducting ideological education in an aggressive, diversified and three-dimensional way, thoroughly carrying out the WPK's five-point policy on bringing about a revolution in training in order to train soldiers to become versatile, a-match-for-a-hundred combatants, establishing an iron discipline in companies and equipping them with features as regulars, and making them the dear home of all soldiers brimming with love and affection.

He also stressed the need for all commanding officers and officers in the staffs and political departments at all levels to put the main emphasis of all work on the companies and render positive assistance to them.

Speeches were made at the meeting.

The speakers referred to the success and experience they made and obtained over the past five years in their efforts to train soldiers into staunch, a-match-for-a-hundred combatants and turn their companies into the sweet home of soldiers by taking it as the twin pillars to build a strong army in politico-ideological and moral terms.

As he listened to the speeches carefully, the Supreme Leader encouraged those commanding officers who spoke about the achievements and experience gained in the work for strengthening their companies and highly appreciated their distinguished feats and devotion.

Though they should take warm care of their soldiers in life as their meticulous eldest brothers and sisters do, company officers should make exact demand in training so as to fully prepare soldiers to be a-match-for-a-hundred combatants, he emphasized.

Pointing out one by one the achievements, experience, lessons and deviations referred to in the speeches, he called on all the participants in the meeting to actively learn from the excellent successes made by advanced units.

Kim Su Gil read out a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly of the DPRK on conferring the title of Labour Hero on exemplary company commanders and political instructors.

Kim Jong Un conferred the certificates of Labour Hero, Gold

Medal (Hammer and Sickle) and Order of National Flag First Class on KPA officers Nam Chol Man, Choe Song Min, Choe Un Hui, Pak Hong Gwan and Ri Man Bok, who made a great contribution to strengthening companies by faithfully following the leadership of the WPK, and had a photograph taken with them on the platform.

Then the Supreme Leader made a speech.

He stressed the need for the participants to be well aware of the intention of the Party that arranged the meeting and make an indepth study of and actively generalize good experience so as to bring about a tangible upsurge in building up companies, and assigned militant tasks to the company commanders and political instructors of the entire army.

Concentrating all efforts on making the KPA an elite armed force in line with the requirements of the developing revolution is a crucial task to be tackled in defending the army-building ideas and leadership exploits of President Kim Il Sung and Chairman Kim Jong Il and boosting military capabilities in every way, he noted.

What is important in turning the KPA into an elite force and powerful army, he stressed, is to focus on building up the company, the basic combat unit of the KPA, and herein lies the key to the building of a powerful army.

He also referred to the importance of the responsibility and role of

company commanders and political instructors, the twin supports for the company, in building the companies of the entire army, the powerful mainstay of the Korean revolution and inexhaustible motive force of advance, as elite combat units.

Pointing to the need for the KPA to create a highly-charged atmosphere of intensive training true to the Party's five-point policy of bringing about a revolution in training, he ordered it to intensify practical actual manoeuvres and practical brain training.

He stressed the necessity for the entire army to mount another campaign to take good care of weapons, and combat and technical equipment, like the apples of the eyes.

He also specified the tasks of steadily intensifying the essential five-point education, vigorously conducting the education in the revolutionary traditions and positively putting forward the good examples to make soldiers adorn every moment of their military service with loyalty and feats, and other tasks for developing the revolutionary armed forces into an ideologically-prepared elite force.

Saying it is important to properly conduct work with soldiers and their feelings, he noted that in order to make companies the ranks with high combat capability full of comradeship, the commanding

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officers should strictly adopt a viewpoint of carrying out all military affairs as they always trust the soldiers, the main agents and masters in strengthening companies, most and rely on them.

He clarified important guidelines to be adhered to in enhancing the sense of organization and discipline, the source of invincibility of the KPA, by establishing a razor-sharp military discipline in companies and equipping them with features of regulars, and in making them dear homes of the soldiers, companies filled with pride and "rich" companies.

He underlined the need to constantly improve the level of working abilities of company officers and specified the ways to decisively improve the guiding methods of the company in the entire army.

Saying that the Korean revolution will continue to make a steady advance forever, he called for fighting vigorously for the victory of the sacred Korean revolution.

A written oath to the Supreme Leader was adopted at the meeting.

Kim Jong Un made a concluding speech.

Company commanders and political instructors of the entire army have got together this time to analyse and review the successes, experience and lessons gained in the efforts to build up companies and discuss practical measures, he said, expressing great satisfaction with the successful meeting which was held amid the immense political enthusiasm of the participants.

Now is the time requiring a deep sense of responsibility for all the company commanders and political instructors to perform feats

unprecedented in the history of our Party's revolutionary struggle and army building, he noted. He expressed the belief and expectations that the participants would devote their all to strengthening companies as intended by the Party, and declared the meeting closed.

The Fifth Conference of Company Commanders and Political Instructors of the Korean People's Army, which was held under the guidance of Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un, marked a historic milestone which provided an occasion for effecting an epochal turn in developing the revolutionary armed forces of the DPRK into an elite and powerful army and inspiring and mobilizing all the

officers and men of the entire army once again to strengthen combat capabilities.

Kim Jong Un had a photo session with the participants in the meeting at May Day Stadium on March 27.

He was accompanied by Ri Myong Su, Kim Su Gil, Ri Yong Gil, No Kwang Chol and other high-ranking officers.

The Supreme Commander extended warmhearted militant greetings to the participants, acknowledging the cheering crowd as he waved back to them.

All are in high spirits with a determination to faithfully support the cause of the Party with the revolutionary arms, he said.

He had a photo taken with the

participants, expressing the belief and expectation that the company commanders and political instructors would fulfil their mission and duty they assume in the efforts to turn all companies of the entire army into the elite militant ranks and make them the dear home of the soldiers as required by the higher stage of the developing revolution, keeping in mind the intention of the Party.

Later the same day, he exceptionally called the exemplary company commanders and political instructors to the headquarters of the Party Central Committee to have another photo taken with them.

Compiled from KCNA



LEADING ARTICLE

Good practices pervade the country

National social practices reflect the history, tradition and national characters of the country, as well as view on life of its people.

The first national social practice of the DPRK is the harmonious relationship between the leader and people.

The great strength of the harmonious whole of the leader and people was the secret behind miracles and victories the Korean people have performed and won overcoming the multitude of difficulties and ordeals.

During the periods of postwar rehabilitation and socialism building in the 1950s, the Korean people performed world-startling miracles in succession with firm confidence that they would surely win as they were led by President Kim Il Sung.

The workers of the then Kangson Steel Works produced 120 000 tons of steel materials with the 60 000-ton capacity blooming mill in hearty response to the earnest call of the President.

And the smelters of the then Kim Chaek Iron Works turned out 270 000 tons of molten iron with the 190 000-ton capacity blast furnace.

Miraculous achievements the Korean people made in all fields across the country ushered in the great Chollima era and the DPRK achieved socialist industrialization in 14 years, clearing up the debris of the three-year war.

Even during the hard times, which are recorded as the periods of Arduous March and forced march in history, the Korean people never left their workplaces because they cherished a firm belief in Chairman Kim Jong Il.

Today they remain faithful to the leadership of Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un who continues to visit factories, fishery stations and cultural and leisure centres rain or shine, and even in the worst ever mid-summer heat wave, finding pleasure in the people's joy and happiness.

During his recent long-distance foreign tour for the second DPRK-US summit local media splashed impressive stories about the heartfelt yearning of the people for their leader and marked production growth all over the front pages, an unreserved show of the harmonious relationship between the leader and people in the country.

Another national social practice of the country is self-reliance of valuing its own and making its way through by its own efforts.



RI KWANG SONG / PICTORIAL KOREA

People raise enthusiastic cheers for Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un in a parade to celebrate the 7th Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea.

Self-reliance is the mode of advance and style of creation of the country and the fighting spirit of its people.

They have taken self-reliance as a treasured sword for prosperity while overcoming all trials and difficulties they faced by their own efforts. As a result, the DPRK turned into an industrial state in 20-odd years after liberation, which makes tractors, lorries, bulldozers, excavators and electric locomotives by its own efforts and technology as it desires.

Although foreign forces have applied extreme sanctions against the DPRK, it steps up the programme of making the national economy Juche-based, modern, scientific and informatized while breaking through the cutting edge of science and technology, produces Juche iron, Juche fibre and Juche fertilizer and builds modern streets and cultural facilities one after another.

It is also a national social practice of the country that all people form a large harmonious family and create a beautiful life helping and leading one another forward.

The Korean people prefer the

word "we" to "I".

"Our factory", "our village", "our school" and others are on everyone's lips, which mirrors their affection for friends and the collective and their will to devote their all to them.

Many stories are told about those people who risked their lives to save their comrades from danger, about young people who get married to honoured disabled soldiers and about those who take good care of parentless children.

At the Second National Conference of Exemplary Young People of Virtue held in 2015 a girl who looked after several parentless children was introduced, leaving a great impression on the participants. And a new word "girl mother" was coined.

The Korean people take great pride in having excellent national social practices of socialist Korea of cultivating the harmonious relationship of society and warm affection for each other while working hard to exalt the dignity of the country and bring national prosperity.

By Pak Song Min PT

VIEW

Everyone given free access to education

All the people learn to their heart's content in the DPRK thanks to the free compulsory education system.

The universal free education in the country traces its history back to the period of the anti-Japanese revolutionary war.

At that time, free education was enforced at schools in revolutionized rural areas and the Children's Corps schools in guerrilla bases.

Education made rapid progress as the country built schools at all levels and established a well-knit education system after Korea's liberation in 1945.

Even in the grim period of the Korean war, education work was conducted without let-up and the universal compulsory primary education system was enforced in 1956 and the universal compulsory secondary education system in 1958.

The DPRK systematically increased investment in education to switch over to the universal 11-year compulsory education in all parts of the country in September 1975.

The enforcement of the system made it possible for the DPRK to earn fame as

a country of learning which enforces a high level of compulsory education.

The universal 12-year compulsory education, which was put in force in 2014, illustrates well the high phase of its education system.

Its enforcement has brought about a radical turn in improving the quality of the secondary general education in line with the requirements of the era of knowledge economy and the global trend of developing education.

In the DPRK, the state bears all costs needed for education work, to say nothing of the schooling of students.

Thanks to the study-while-you-work system, everyone can get access to higher education and the country is provided with the education system and environment by which they can learn for life.

The DPRK government aims to develop the country into a socialist educational power in the 21st century by training all students as reliable pillars for the building of a civilized socialist nation and making all the people well versed in science and technology.

By Ri Sang Il PT



PAK CHANG BOK / THE PYONGYANG TIMES

A woman teaches her son how to use a computer at the Sci-Tech Complex.

RESPONSE

DPRK's educational system lauded

Foreign visitors unanimously admire Pyongyang Teachers Training College which was renovated in recent years.

The head of the Turkish friendship delegation said that he gained a deep understanding of the DPRK's educational system.

In the DPRK students are taught to cherish a noble view of life that they should consider the interests of the collective before their personal comfort and pleasure, he said, noting its educational system is excellent as it closely combines school, social and family education.

As they receive such a good schooling from childhood, I think all the Korean people work hard for the prosperity of their country, he added.

Pham Van Duc, head of a delegation of the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, wrote in the visitor's book: Pyongyang Teachers Training College has developed into a modern teacher-training institution under the care of Chairman Kim Jong Un. I was deeply impressed by the teaching method of giving useful knowledge by combining

theoretical education and practical training. I am confident that the college will produce many educators possessed of profound knowledge, great ability and masterly teaching skills in the future, too.

A professor from Leiden University of the Netherlands also referred to his deep impression of the lecturers and students of the college: The college employs original teaching methods as it applies advanced technologies to education and edification. Looking round the college

provided with every educational condition and environment, I have come to have a better understanding of the DPRK policy of regarding education as the most important matter.

He added that the DPRK makes rapid progress as it prioritizes science and education.

A member of the Pakistani friendship delegation described the college as a prototype of a college which is on a highly scientific, IT and modern footing. Korean students are lucky to enjoy the rights to learn free to their heart's content, and this clearly demonstrates the excellence of the DPRK's socialist educational system, he said.

By Jong Chol PT

EDZ

Border area likely a key investment destination

Located in Manpho, Jagang Province in the northern part of the country, the Manpho economic development zone is attracting a good deal of attention from investors.

Comprising some parts of Mitha-ri and Phosang-ri of the city bordering Ji'an in China's Jilin Province across the Amnok River, the EDZ's total area is 3.9 square kilometres.

It is provided with conditions favourable for building an EDZ centring on modern agriculture, tourism and trade.

It is situated in temperate latitudes with fertile soil of the alluvial plain along the banks of the Amnok, underpinning profitable agricultural development.

There are many historical relics in the city including the site of Segom Pavilion.

The pavilion which was on a cliff next to the river dates back to the feudal Joseon dynasty.

The structure on the cliff rising 100 metres from the surface of the river water commanded so magnificent views that it had been known as one of the eight scenic spots in the northwestern part of Korea. Unfortunately, it was burnt down by Japanese aggressors in 1938.

The Mangmi Pavilion which dates from 1461, the 1 200-metre-long stone wall around



Manpho and tomb clusters in Kyongsong valley are showcases for the creativity of the people of Koguryo and Koryo kingdoms and the feudal Joseon dynasty.

There are also Yonha, Mitha and other mineral waters.

The EDZ has a developed traffic system. There are bridges and a border railway station nearby and the railway lines linking the east and west coasts cross the zone. And Ji'an railway station across the river is directly linked with Changchun via Tonghua.

The Jangjagang Power Station and the Manpho Yonha Power Station are near at hand and the Amnok is a good source of water for use.

Currently, the EDZ master plan is being formulated while development projects are being pushed.

Jang Kwang Hyok

EXHIBITION

Crowd-pulling event attests to booming footwear industry

The Spring National Footwear Exhibition-2019 took place in the Pyongyang Yokjon Department Store between March 20 and 26.

It was held in the form of exhibition and presentation of scientific and technological achievements, drawing more than 110 000 articles in over 1 000 kinds presented by some 60 shoemakers, and dozens of valuable research findings.

All the participating units came up with new products brimming with seasonal features.

According to Jo Myong Sik, chief engineer of the Wonsan Leather Shoes Factory, they put on show over 160 kinds of goods including leather shoes for both men and women and dozens of them were developed after last year's exhibition. Most popular exhibits were a variety of children's shoes with various decorations that are liked by kids.

The Ryuwon and Pothonggang shoes factories and Pyongyang Leather Shoes Factory presented trainers for spring and autumn including women's knitted sneakers, women's neat and colourful leather shoes and a new type of light and resilient shoes that are highly resistant to wear

and can regulate heat, and the Kukhung Trading Company and the Sochon Haedong Factory displayed health-promoting straw sandals, various boots and summer shoes with netted uppers.

There were also many sports shoes like football boots and basketball shoes.

The Rason Sollyang Trading Company exhibited a trainer incorporating an energy-dampening technique. Its sole is made of a new elastic material that enables athletes to give full play to their abilities.

During the exhibition, the presentation provided participants with a good opportunity to learn about valuable technical innovation

plans and research findings and to exchange new techniques.

Special draws were research hits made in designing footwear, domestically producing materials and improving quality, including the method of making glue with reclaimed rubber developed by the Sunchon Leather Shoes Factory.

Many units applied for the introduction of an adhesive developed and introduced by the Hamhung Adhesives Factory as its solvent is made with locally available materials.

According to the sponsor of the show, visitors numbered a total of more than 100 000.

By Jong Hwa Sun PT



Visitors appreciate leather shoes at the Spring National Footwear Exhibition-2019.

CARE

Centre works to rehabilitate disabled children

The Korea Rehabilitation Centre for Children with Disabilities does a good job of recuperative treatment, nurturing and special education of children with disabilities.

It gives rehabilitation services to the children with autism, cerebral palsy, hearing impairment, Down's syndrome and other troubles.

At present dozens of disabled children are receiving special education at the centre.

Education in both oral and sign language and vocal exercise using different tools and materials for hearing-impaired children and education of children with intelligent disorders are conducted by experienced educators.

Special efforts are being directed to vocal and instrumental music and painting.

Good successes have been made in recuperative treatment.

Experienced therapists provide children with services by means of different facilities at physical treatment, work

cure, hearing rehabilitation and playing rooms.

The centre also works to raise public awareness of the importance of recuperation of the children and improve the conditions and environment for their recovery. In addition, it carries on technical exchanges and cooperation with foreign partners.

"We will make positive

efforts to find the children with disabilities as early as possible and constantly improve our services so that they can get access to equal schooling," said Song Hyang Chun, directress of the centre.

The centre which opened in 2013 will admit seventh-term pupils on April 1 this year.

By Jong Sun Bok PT



Children with mental impairment are under training at the Korea Rehabilitation Centre for Children with Disabilities.

UTENSIL

Favoured enamelware products turn out

Enamelware was one of the popular products at the 29th National Exhibition of Consumer Goods held in Pyongyang at the end of last year.

It is the global trend to produce heat-resistant enamelled pans with glass lids and they are favoured by housewives for their good appearance and convenience for use.

The Sinuiju Enamelled Ironware Factory turns out new types of enamelware with diverse uses.

It is widely-known as the country's leading enamelware producer.

Choe Kyong Chol, technical section chief of the factory, said that a powerful technical team was organized in the factory to conduct research work for steadily improving the quality of products.

The quality of enamelware is generally decided by the quality of glaze which is put on the surface of metal.

Technicians upgraded the qualitative indexes of glaze to increase its resistance to acetic acid three times more than before.

According to them, in the past the factory's enamelware was regarded to fit for the standard even when they withstood 4 percent acetic acid.

However, the technicians developed the glaze that can stand up to 12 per cent acetic acid by intensifying research.

They also established a production process recycling scrap iron plates.

In order to increase the sticking intensity of iron plates with organic paints, they roughened the surface of iron plates.

The factory now produces not only kitchen enamelware but also such goods needed for the medical sector and chemical industry sector.

By Yun Kyong II PT

PROFILE

Like teachers, like students



PAK KWANG HUN / THE PYONGYANG TIMES

Cha Yong Ho (second from left) at Kim Hyong Jik University of Education teaches his students a knack of memorizing.

Students of Kim Hyong Jik University of Education bagged a total of 12 gold, silver and bronze medals and four trophies at the 27th World Memory Championships in December last year.

Locals still lavish praise on their teacher as well as the champions.

"We have cultivated our abilities as we've learned the knack of memorizing from proficient teachers. Our lecturer's exact demand and our fellow students' trust and encouragement were a great source of strength for us," said Pang Un Sim who was awarded the International Grand Master of Memory prize at the championships.

Cha Yong Ho, department chief of the university and instructor of the future champions, were lost in deep thought as he prepared for the world competition between brains.

Considerable achievements had been made in that field in the DPRK in the course of a good deal of research studies and competitions as the country has long attached importance to memory education. 'But these are not enough,' Cha thought. 'There should be some new mnemonics in order to compete with the world and lead it.'

It was urgent for him to work out and perfect a scientific memory teaching method that could break the world record and to attain proficiency in it.

He burnt midnight oil searching through documents and examining the efficiency of his new finds for competition events.

As he poured all his intelligence and passion into the development of his new teaching methodology, he finally succeeded in completing the mnemonics that are very efficient in increasing imaginative and

associative power.

His original teaching method was of great service to the Korean students in notching up notable success in the global memory competition.

During the championships, heads of memory associations of different countries invited Cha to their regular symposiums and many foreign instructors and parents asked him to tell them the Korean way of memorizing.

Whenever people congratulate him on his excellent memorizing method, he replies:

"Our students' success is to the credit of their middle school teachers who found out their talents and introduced them to the rudiments of memorizing."

As he says, Pang Un Sim and Ri Song Mi who finished Rason Middle School No. 1 and Kim Su Rim who graduated from Sariwon Foreign Languages School got the knack of memorizing and cultivated imaginative power in their middle school days.

During their winter vacation last January they visited their alma maters and expressed their thanks to their teachers.

"We went to different schools and our teachers were different, but they were unanimous in telling us: 'Your success is not simply thanks to any teachers but to the socialist educational system. You should study harder in the warm embrace of the country, which discovers everyone's talent and helps them demonstrate it, in order to exalt its honour,'" said Ri Song Mi.

True to the requests of their old teachers, the champions are working hard to achieve higher goals.

By Pang Un Ju PT

EVENT

World days highlight TB control, weather service, safe water

'Time to get ready'

World TB Day was observed with an event at the People's Palace of Culture in Pyongyang on March 25.

The meeting was attended by health workers, relevant officials and members of country offices of international organizations including the WHO.

Pak Jong Min, department director of the Ministry of Public Health, in his speech said that the DPRK has developed the National TB Control Strategic Plan (2018-2021) to achieve the ambitious target of END TB strategy set by the WHO and waged the nationwide anti-TB campaign.

Thushara Fernando, WHO representative in the DPRK, said that the WHO set "It's time to get ready" as the theme of this year's World TB Day, and that it calls on governments, affected communities, civil

society organizations, healthcare providers and national and international partners to work together.

"We renew our commitment to provide technical and operation support to END TB in the DPRK," he concluded.

The achievements made in eliminating TB in the country

were introduced and future plans were unveiled. There was a Q&A on TB prevention.

Participants saw an art performance given by the hygienic motivational team of students.

That day, a hygienic information campaign was conducted in all provinces.



KCNA

World TB Day is observed with an event at the People's Palace of Culture in Pyongyang.

'Sun, Earth and Weather'

The World Meteorological Organization set "The Sun, the Earth and the Weather" as the theme for this year's World Meteorological Day.

According to satellite measurements taken over the past 30 years, the energy output of the sun has not increased. And global warming which is melting ice in polar regions and heating the oceans is ascribed to an increase in greenhouse gases that absorb solar radiation like carbon dioxide.

Carbon dioxide concentrations continue to rise, reaching 405 parts per million in 2017. Experts assert that if the current trend continues, the world will see

temperature rise of 3-5 °C by the end of the 21st century.

The World Meteorological Organization on January 25 this year designated extreme weather phenomena, climate change, natural disaster and water resource crisis as four risks facing the world in 2019.

In the DPRK, too, extreme weather conditions such as temperature increase, downpour, drought and cold wave are becoming more frequent and intense in consequence of global warming.

It was hit by the severest drought in 100 years in 2014, a severe dry spell in 2017 and extreme heat in summer last year, which had never been recorded in the country's meteorological observation, and torrential downpour as

well. And it had precipitation deficits and abnormally high temperature in winter early this year.

To provide against such phenomena, the DPRK has paid constant attention to developing meteorological work.

The Hydro-Meteorological Service is working to modernize meteorological observation and ensure the accuracy and promptness of disaster forecast and long- and short-term forecasts, while expanding the automatic weather observation network and monitoring weather conditions in real time.

"We will promptly deal with climate-related risks in close cooperation with the WMO," said Pang Sun Nyo, department chief of the Hydro-Meteorological Service.

'Leave no one behind'

A symposium took place at the Grand People's Study House in Pyongyang on March 27 on the theme of "Leaving no one behind" to mark World Water Day.



CHOE MI GYONG / THE PYONGYANG TIMES

A seminar is held at the Grand People's Study House in Pyongyang to mark World Water Day.

Yu Su Jong, deputy director of the external economic cooperation department of the Ministry of Urban Management, said that numerous people suffer great damage from polluted water and poor hygienic conditions, adding the DPRK witnesses water shortage caused

by severe drought. He called for taking proactive measures for the securement and effective use of water resources and the protection of natural ecological environment.

Kencho Namgyal, chief of the WASH section in the UNICEF Office in Pyongyang, said that the UNICEF would continue supporting the DPRK government's policies and efforts to provide access to safe water and sanitation and gender responsive hygiene promotion to better the lives of children and women.

Other speakers referred to the seriousness of water scarcity, which is now arising as a pressing issue in the world, and the importance of supplying clean drinking water, and emphasized the need to join efforts so as to supply clean water, leaving no one behind, irrespective of city and rural area through positive activities.

By Kwon Hyo Song PT

STATEMENT

FM: Golan Heights still Syria's inalienable part

A spokesperson for the DPRK Ministry of Foreign Affairs told KCNA on March 27 as regards the issue of the Golan Heights of Syria:

The world recognizes that the Golan Heights are an inalienable, sacred part of Syrian territory, and relevant

resolutions have already been adopted at the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly.

The denial of Syria's dominion over the Golan Heights is an infringement on the sovereignty of Syria, and it will further aggravate the

unstable regional situation.

We extend full support and solidarity to the Syrian government and people in their efforts to get back the occupied Golan Heights, safeguard the country's sovereignty and achieve territorial integrity.

WILDLIFE

Immediate action needed to protect endangered species

The protection of endangered wildlife is an important task facing the world.

According to a survey, 18 percent of rapacious birds are on the verge of extinction.

There are about 550 species of predatory birds in the world, such as eagle, hawk and owl.

A research group argued that if the predatory birds disappear, it will have pernicious influence on the ecosystem, calling on all the countries to take thoroughgoing measures for the protection of them.

Not only predatory birds are

in the danger of extinction.

According to information released by the World Natural Protection Fund, the number of animals including reptiles, birds and amphibians reduced by more than half between 1970 and 2014.

About 25 000 animal species are on the brink of extinction and there is a growing concern that two thirds of the wildlife might vanish forever by 2020.

Recently, a large quantity of ivory and pangolin scales, whose traffic is prohibited internationally, were confiscated

in Kampala, the capital of Uganda, and Sabah on Borneo in the eastern part of Malaysia.

Experts see the reduction of habitats due to hunting of wild animals for money, prospecting and extraction of oil and gas, the reckless deforestation for the expansion of cultivated land and the climate change and sea level rise caused by global warming as a contributory factor in the extinction of many wildlife species.

On February 20, Namibia unveiled a plan for the protection of wild horses from extinction.

Unless drastic measures are taken, many wildlife species will completely disappear, which will exert seriously negative effects on human activities, experts warned.

By Song Jong Ho PT

DISPUTE

NATO and Russia set on collision course

Disparity between Russia and NATO has seen a growing tendency these days.

In February NATO expressed support to the US' suspension of fulfilment of its commitments to the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty). Earlier, NATO secretary general told a press conference that NATO is ready to solve the problem by taking military measures.

NATO has escalated its military presence in the western border areas of Russia. Most noticeable here is the arms buildup in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Poland.

The US plans to deploy an interceptor missile system with MK-41 launching device as a major component in Poland. The launching device can be converted into an attack system which is capable of launching Tomahawk cruise missiles at any time it wants. Such a system has already been deployed and is now in operation in Romania.

NATO also reinforces its troops on the Baltic coast and in the Balkan region.

Last year the number of NATO military exercises more than doubled that the year before.

Russia stands up to the

military expansion of NATO. It views the Western military bloc's arms buildup as a product of its wrong and structure-breaking military and political strategy and takes military countermeasures against it.

Russia announced that it would push ahead with the serial production of a missile system, Avant-garde, capable of piercing any missile defence system and arm a regiment of its Strategic Rocket Force with this system within this year.

Russian President Putin told the local media representatives that the manufacture of this Avant-garde missile system can match that of the first artificial earth satellite in the world in its significance.

Russian Defence Minister Shoigu, at a recent ministry council meeting, said the preparations for the Russia-Belarus joint military exercise and the special drill of collective rapid response forces of the collective security treaty organization have entered a full stage as he referred to his country's military plans for this year.

According to its plan, the Russian army is to organize a tank regiment and coastal missile

battalion in the Baltic Fleet this year and an anti-aircraft missile regiment in the mobile reserve army of the Western Military District till the end of the year.

Experts argue that the breakup of the INF Treaty will make old Russia-NATO antagonism spiral up to a phase of unpredictable conflict.

By Choe Yong Nam PT

EFFORT

Nations out to develop sports

Many countries in the world are now paying close attention to the development of sports.

Recently the Indonesian President issued an executive order on directing nationwide efforts to the development of football.

The order specified goals in each stage including the positive introduction of advanced football techniques, frequent organization of home games, updating of football grounds to conform to international standards, increase of training bases and intensification of state guidance and management for the development of football.

Vietnam is very concerned to develop football.

It attaches importance to the training of young football players. After setting up a football school, it built a national juvenile football training centre on the basis of it. The national team and U-23 national team members as well as the men's and women's juvenile national team players are to have intensive training at the centre.

Having announced a football development plan till 2020 and long-term prospects till 2030, the government continues to increase the number of local football clubs while focusing on establishing a proper national football game system.

Most recently, the Chinese Football Association announced a new plan for developing women's football in a far-sighted manner and took appropriate measures to increase the number of women's football teams by far and involve them all in domestic events of various divisions. At the same time U-15, U-17, U-19 and other men's and women's basketball teams at all levels are organized

with particular attention being paid to scouting for promising basketball players.

Laos pushes ahead with a programme to pick out children who have an aptitude for sports, enrol them at sports schools and teach them weightlifting, archery and other sports techniques in order to train sports aces.

With state concern with sports growing, projects are now under way to build general sports facilities in several countries.

Russia worked out and presses on with the plan for newly building or renovating over 40 sports centres for the training of archery, wrestling, skiing, rhythmic gymnastics and other sports in many places by 2020.

A large general sports facility is to be built in the suburbs of Jakarta, Indonesia, in which promising players to compete in international events will be given intensive training.

Kenya has set a goal to develop tennis as a mass sport and plans to build a training centre in Nairobi to encourage everyone to learn to play tennis. Zimbabwe intends to train many talented sportspeople in various sports such as football, tennis and swimming by establishing a college of physical education.

Cooperation in the sports sector has also been promoted.

In mid-January Cuba and Iran signed an MOU on mutual cooperation in the field of sports.

Earlier, China and Croatia concluded an agreement on the development of mutual cooperation in sports.

Efforts are growing in many countries in the world to develop sports.

By Om Ryong PT

JAPAN

Swimming against stream

Many nations are voicing their opinion that the anti-DPRK sanctions should be lifted as there is no rationale left for them. China and Russia are asserting that the sanctions should be ended in response to the DPRK's measures for regional détente.

And the international community acknowledges that the situation in the Korean peninsula and the region is turning towards peace and stability thanks to the DPRK's proactive, leading efforts.

Nevertheless, Japan is scheming to drag France into the surveillance of "maritime transshipping" of the DPRK.

Recently, as to the involvement of the vessels and planes of the French army in the surveillance of the alleged transshipping, Japanese Defence Minister Iwaya touted that he "welcomes it as it helps ensure efficiency of the resolution of the UN Security Council" and "will go on imposing sanctions for the denuclearization" of the

DPRK.

Foreign media commented that the Japanese authorities are obviously struggling to get out of its political and diplomatic isolation in the Korean peninsula and the region.

Japan is now quarantined from the region for refusing to liquidate the past as it neglects the general will of the international community and seeks militaristic revival, which goes against the trend of the times.

Japan should be aware that if it clings to the policy of hostility to the DPRK, it will completely be excluded from the mainstream of the regional situation.

By Min Chol PT

SOCCER

Tournament sees new playing tactics work

The 2018-2019 DPRK Premier League soccer tournament is growing fiercer.

On March 24 there was a football match between Sonbong and Pyongyang at Kim Il Sung Stadium.

In the seesaw battle to hold the initiative, Sonbong opened the scoring with a header of a volley from the corner kick in the seventh minute after the kick-off of the match. It continued to increase attack speed and repeatedly staged fierce attacks to succeed in scoring another goal with a three-men combination based on

a single pass eight minutes after the first goal.

Pyongyang also tried a series of attacks to make up for the losses, but failed to grasp a scoring opportunity.

The match ended 2-0 in Sonbong's favour.

Sonbong caught the eyes of experts and fans in the current season for its exceptional ability.

It beat the Ministry of Light Industry club 2-1 and tied with Hwaepul, a local power, 2-2 in March.

Referring to the advanced

scores of this club, experts pay attention to the changes in team lineup and playing mode.

Sonbong formed a new team comprising five new players including three forwards.

As they have played games together for a long time in the training group, the five newcomers are especially strong in man-to-man combination.

Their active role helped quicken the speed of transition to defence and attack by far and changed the playing mode into scoring by long-distance passes, well-knit two- to three-men combinations and various other methods.

Spectators are of the opinion that such changes in game tactics are also seen in the Ministry of Light Industry, Amnokgang, Pyongyang and many other clubs and as a result matches have become very dynamic.

There were other matches between Kigwancha and Kalmaegi, Wolmido and Jebi, Rimyongsu and April 25, and Amnokgang and Ryomyong at Kim Il Sung Stadium on the same day. Kigwancha, Jebi, April 25 and Ryomyong defeated their opponents 3-1, 3-2, 3-0 and 3-2 respectively.

By Jong Tang Song PT



CHAE MYONG RIM / THE PYONGYANG TIMES

A scoring scene from match between Kigwancha and Kalmaegi in which the former beat the latter 3-1.

RELIC

Collection of Buddhist scriptures known to be the oldest

Among the Korean national heritage of worldwide significance are the 80 000 Blocks of the Complete

Collection of Buddhist Scriptures.

As an encyclopaedia of Buddhism, the collection was printed with over 80 000 wood blocks on which the sutras and other Buddhist materials were engraved.



A copy of the Complete Collection of Buddhist Scriptures (above) and a wood block.

It is also known as the "Koryo Tripitaka" as it was published in the period of Koryo Kingdom (918-1392), the first unified state of Korea.

The engraving and printing of the collection

went on for 15 years from 1236 to 1251.

Those scriptures printed by the 80 000 wood blocks amounted to 6 793 volumes in 1 539 kinds.

They have so far been known as the oldest and most complete collection in the world.

The wood blocks were made from *Machilus thunbergii*, birch and white birch that are hard and have fine grain. To prevent them from cracking these trees were sawn and soaked in seawater for a certain period of time and dried well before using. A bronze band was put around the four corners of a block and fixed by nail and posts were added on both ends of each block to prevent it from twisting. And the surface of the board was lacquered to protect it from decaying and becoming wormy.

Each block is 69.6 cm long, 24 cm wide and 3.7 cm thick.

As letters carved on the block

QUALIFICATION

DPRK qualified for 2020 AFC U-23 championship

Group G preliminary matches for the 2020 AFC U-23 Championship finals took place between March 22 and 26 in Mongolia.

The qualifying matches are played in 11 groups and winners of all groups and four teams with high scores among the runners-up are to advance to the championship finals with the home team.

In Group G the DPRK

team played matches against Mongolia, Singapore and Chinese Hong Kong.

It beat the Mongolian team 1-0 and tied with Singaporeans 1-1.

It won the match with Hong Kong of China 2-0 on March 26 to finish first in Group G and secure a berth for the 2020 AFC U-23 Championship finals.

Compiled from KCNA

TENNIS

Man dreams of flying flag on world stage

An Chung Il, player of the sports club of the Pyongyang Kim Jong Suk Textile Mill, is a local tennis star.

Last year alone, he snatched 12 medals including nine golds in the tennis event at such national games as the Mangyongdae Prize Games in Celebration of the Day of the Sun, the Pochonbo Torch Prize Games and the National Championships.

He has made clean sweep of all trophies for several years.

His fellow players say that An's forte is a powerful and precise drive.

Born in Sariwon, North Hwanghae Province, he started his career as a tennis player in 2004 when he was 13 at Sariwon City Juvenile Sports School.

Three years later, he was chosen by the sports club of the Pyongyang Kim Jong Suk Textile Mill which is on a par with the first-division sports clubs in the event.

It was not easy to train for more than nine hours a day, but he practised each of thousands of shots in a responsible manner like a last shot which decides match. He would hit the goal he set more highly than the training plan worked out by the coach to enhance his physical ability.

When he hurt his kneecaps, which can be claimed to be fatal for tennis players, a few years ago, he got over his illness with strong will to play tennis again.

Although he often got enervated due to exhaustion, he



SONG SOK / THE PYONGYANG TIMES

An Chung Il is engrossed in training in the factory compound.

drew inspiration from the coach, officials and other employees who have devoted sincerity to him and taken good care of him while sweating together with him at the training ground, rain or shine.

Whenever he receives congratulations after winning matches, he says: "The mission of athletes is to present gold medals to the homeland. I want to fly the national flag on world stage like the world vaulting horse king Ri Se Gwang and weightlifting champion Om Yun Chol."

"I think I should work harder to hasten that day."

To attain such a goal, An Chung Il is training hard.

By Kim Rye Yong PT

are precise, artistic in form and even as if written by a person, they look refined and powerful in writing, showcasing the high level of handwriting skills.

Each volume contains the places and years of engraving and the names of persons who

carved the blocks, which suggests thousands of typographers were engaged in engraving.

A full set of the volumes are now kept at Pohyon Temple in Mt Myohyang.

By Kil Chung Il PT

